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DE RUEHPU #1357/01 2681657
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8893
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 2065
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0236
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1838
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2420
RUEHMT/AMCONSUL MONTREAL 0326
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 1261
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCOWCV/CCGDSEVEN MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001357

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR, DRL, S/CRS, INR/IAA
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
TREASURY FOR MAUREEN WAFER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AEMR](#) [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT PREVAL'S FOCUS AT UNGA AND BEYOND:
DISASTER RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION

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¶1. (U) This message is sensitive but unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

¶2. (SBU) Summary: The recent series of hurricanes that devastated Haiti has boiled down the political agenda of President Preval to a single point: disaster relief and reconstruction, and rallying the international community to finance it. Preval and his new Prime Minister are trying to turn this crisis into an opportunity by using post-hurricane reconstruction of infrastructure and agriculture to jump start long-stalled development. He will use UNGA as a platform to rally the international community to support this effort. In upcoming months, partners of Haiti should expect to hear virtually nothing else from the President and other GOH leaders. End Summary.

¶3. (SBU) Before the four tropical storms and hurricanes that hit Haiti in August and early September, Haitian President Rene Preval's agenda was relatively diffuse. His highest priority remained fighting drugs and corruption to consolidate domestic security gains made since late 2006. Secondary goals were reforming the justice system and law enforcement, changing the constitution, and reforming the economy to stimulate investment and create jobs. The government's National Strategy Document on Growth and Poverty Reduction, approved last November, was to serve as a national development plan once the new government of Prime Minister Michele Duvivier Pierre-Louis was confirmed. The April riots produced a short-lived subsidy program for rice and fertilizer, plus a series of measures promised by Preval to get Haitian agriculture back on its feet that had not begun to be implemented when the first of the storms struck in August. Preval's message to UNGA this year would have been that Haiti was continuing its recovery, but needed continued international assistance and the presence of MINUSTAH to consolidate gains in security and boost economic growth.

¶4. (SBU) The August-September hurricane chain forced Preval to boil down domestic and foreign priorities to a single item: disaster relief and reconstruction -- and rallying donor countries to cough up the funds. Since early September, flood damage and relief efforts completely

dominate local media reporting. The government of Michele Duvivier Pierre-Louis that took office September 5 immediately made disaster response its sole priority. All public appearances by the President and the Prime Minister highlight disaster relief and follow-on reconstruction efforts. The Prime Minister has said that Haiti should use this crisis as an opportunity to rebuild. In private meetings, as with visiting USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore September 16, President Preval urged the U.S. to continue our efforts for immediate relief for disaster victims, and to extend aid to quickly rebuild damaged roads and bridges, and to help relaunch agriculture.

15. (SBU) At UNGA and other upcoming international meetings, President Preval will want to discuss one thing alone: helping Haiti and other countries of the region cope with hurricane damage. Presidential Chief of Staff Fritz Longchamp told Polcouns September 18 that pursuing disaster relief and reconstruction was the only reason Preval would attend the September 24 Haiti Key Players Group meeting. This would also be the President's uppermost talking point at the Secretary's September 25 meeting with CARICOM and regional heads of government. Longchamp hinted strongly that Preval's September 26 address to UNGA would feature prominently an appeal for help. So would his appearance at the Francophonie Summit in Quebec City October 17-19.

16. (SBU) Comment: President Preval and the Pierre-Louis government appear to be trying to turn this natural disaster into an opportunity to focus sympathetic international attention on Haiti, to ramp up donor countries' contributions, and to use disaster reconstruction to jump-start Haiti's neglected economy. For at least the next several months, all international partners meeting with

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Government of Haiti leaders should expect to hear almost nothing else from Haitian leaders except pleas for increased assistance. The requests will focus on disaster relief, reconstruction of infrastructure, and jump-starting Haiti's economy, especially agriculture.
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